CRACKLE
CRACKLE

...THERE WASN'T ANYTHING WE COULD DO.
CLENCH
THIS TIME AROUND...

ALL THAT MONEY...
DAD...WAS THIS REALLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO?
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT, IT'S ONLY MONEY.
THE LIVES OF OUR CHILDREN ARE PRICE-LESS.
YES. EVERY-ONE IN THE VILLAGE AGREED IT WAS THE RIGHT CALL.

SORRY IT TOOK THE POLICE COMING FOR US TO BELIEVE YOU.
I HEAR Y'ALL WERE DOING EVERYTHING YOU COULD TO FOLLOW THE OTHER ORDERS
WITH ALL THIS MANPOWER, THEY'RE SURE TO CATCH THE CULPRIT SOON.
PAT
KAZUNARI
CHATTER
CHATTER
WE CAN'T LEAVE THE VILLAGE...
THEY SAY THEY'LL BE HERE TIL THEY SOLVE THE CASE, BUT HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?
A HUNDRED GRAND PER LIFE IS A BARGAIN IF YOU ASK ME!
WA HA HA

AND YOURSELF, SHUUHEI-SAN?
YEAH, EVERYONE IN OUR FAMILY'S DONE.
FINISHED PAYING YOUR LAST RESPECTS TO YOUR SAVINGS?
I'M DONE TOO
THE SHOTGUN I WAS GONNA BUY MYSELF FOR MY 25TH BIRTHDAY IS NOW JUST A PILE OF ASH
ALMOST.
GLANCE
GLANCE
I NEED A SPARE PAIR OF GLASSES TOO, BUT THESE'LL HAVE TO LAST A WHILE LONGER.
DID EVERYONE THROW THEIR MONEY IN?

RYUUJI?
HE'S UP AND WALKING AGAIN?
I SAW RYUUJI AND HIS MOTHER THROW THEIRS IN EARLIER.
THANK GOODNESS...
WHEW
YEAH
I KNOW
HE WAS PRETTY WOBBLY, THOUGH.
IT'LL BE A WHILE BEFORE HE'S FULLY RECOVERED.
SO!
NONE OF THIS "GOING IT ALONE" FOOLISHNESS ANYMORE!
POKE
ERK

SO I'VE HEARD.
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
TAE-SAN, HUH...?
SHE'S A STUBBORN OLD LADY.
LET'S SEE...IF YOUR FAMILY'S DONE...
I THINK THAT JUST LEAVES KUDOU TAE-SAN
TRICKS?! AFTER SO MANY DEATHS?!
CRACKLE
CRACKLE
SHE STILL THINKS THE WHOLE KING'S GAME IS JUST KIDS PLAYING TRICKS
WELL, SHE'S AN OLD WOMAN WHO'S BEEN ON HER OWN FOR A LONG TIME
OR...
APPAR-ENTLY SHE THINKS IT'S ALL COINCI-DENCE...

CRACKLE
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE
FW...OOM
GOOD...EVEN TAE-SAN FOLLOWED THE KING'S ORDER.

WHAT'S THE KING'S REAL MOTIVE? THIS IS ALL COMPLETELY MEANINGLESS.
KAZU-NARI.
NATSU-KO...
IT'S FOR THE BEST... IF SHE HADN'T OBEYED...
THE KING WOULD'VE GIVEN HER A HEART ATTACK, WAS IT?
I BURNED MY MONEY TOO, SO I'M NOT ONE TO TALK. BUT I THINK WE WOULD'VE BEEN FINE
NO ONE COULD PULL OFF A MURDER WITH ALL THESE COPS AROUND
I DON'T DIS-AGREE, BUT.

HE'S GOT A GRUDGE AGAINST YONAKI VILLAGE...?

OR MAYBE...

FIVE MINUTES TO GO...
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 10, 11:55 P.M.
KAZUNARI-KUN.
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
I DON'T LIKE TO SEE MINORS OUT THIS LATE.
LOOM

.....
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
YOU WERE SO COOPERATIVE THIS MORNING
GLARE
DOUJIMA-SAN, DO YOU SUSPECT ME AND YUUJI?
HMM?
WHY ON EARTH WOULD YOU THINK THAT?
BECAUSE YOU GAVE US BOTH ENVELOPES...
...SO YOU COULD GET OUR FINGERPRINTS, RIGHT?

MMM...
YOU'RE A PRETTY SMART KID, KAZUNARI-KUN.
AND YOU'RE MONI-TORING ME EVEN NOW, RIGHT?
AWW, JEEZ.
SMACK
YOU NO-TICED, HUH?

DON'T GET ME WRONG...
YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY PERSON WE'RE KEEPING AN EYE ON.
I'VE ORDERED MY MEN TO KEEP SEV-ERAL VILLAG-ERS UNDER SURVEIL-LANCE.

IT'S CERTAINLY A POSSIBILITY.
ONE OF SEVERAL WE'RE TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION.
KEEP IT BETWEEN US, OKAY?
OH.
BUT THAT'S A SECRET!
SO YOU DON'T THINK IT'S SOMEONE FROM OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE?
JUST KEEP IN MIND THAT WE HAVE TO SUSPECT YOU TO A CERTAIN DEGREE AS ONE OF THOSE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES
AS WELL AS--
OOPS, THAT'S A SECRET TOO.

THINGS AREN'T EXACTLY GOING SMOOTHLY FOR US, EITHER.
HMPH
WE HAVEN'T FOUND ANY MURDER WEAPONS...
...AND THE KING'S LETTER HAD NO PRINTS ON IT.
WE ASSUMED THE MOTIVE BEHIND THIS ORDER WOULD BE TO STEAL THE MONEY...
FSSSS
FSSSS
...BUT IT'S ALL ASH NOW, JUST LIKE HE WANTED.
SO YOU'RE SAYING YOU CAN'T CATCH THE KILLER?
HA HA.
NOTHING OF THE SORT.

SEE, ELDER? WHAT'D I TELL YA?!
WHETHER IT'S SOME-ONE FROM YONAKI...OR NOT.
WE WILL GET THIS GUY.
IT MAY TAKE LONGER THAN WE WANT, BUT WE WON'T GIVE UP.
IT'S JUST PAST MID-NIGHT.
LOOK.
I'D HOPED HE'D MAKE A MOVE...
...BUT I GUESS WITH SO MANY OFFI-CERS--
HA HA HA HA HA HA!

HYA
HYA
HYA
BURNING SUCH A FORTUNE, WHAT A BUNCH OF FOOLS!
EVEN THE POLICE FELL FOR THAT STUPID PRANK!
WE JUST HAD TO BE SURE!
OUR LIVES ARE WORTH A LOT MORE THAN MONEY.
I'VE GOT MY FAMILY TO THINK ABOUT, TOO.
I'M NOT GOING TO LET SOME MADMAN HARM YUUJI AND SANAE, MY GRAND-CHILDREN!
THEY'RE MY RESPONSI-BILITY UNTIL MY SON AND HIS WIFE CAN FIND JOBS THAT LET THEM LIVE HERE AGAIN.
YOU'RE ALL ALONE, TAE-SAN. YOU JUST DON'T UN-DERSTAND.
TWITCH

MAYBE SO, ELDER...
BUT IF YOUR GRANDKIDS ARE SO DEAR TO YOU
YOU SHOULD'VE USED THAT MONEY TO BUY THEM NEW CLOTHES OR SOMETHING!
YOU NEED TO THINK MORE CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT'S BEST FOR THE VILLAGERS
YOU'VE KICKED UP ALL THIS FUSS OVER NOTHING.
MURMUR
MURMUR
BUT TAE-SAN IN THE END YOU THREW YOUR MONEY IN THE FIRE TOO!
BAH.
WHAT KIND OF IMBECILE DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?
ALL I BURNED WAS AN EMPTY ENVELOPE!
GASP

KUDOU-SAN...
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
DIDN'T YOU AGREE TO FOLLOW THE ORDER LIKE THE REST OF US?!
TAE-SAN...
SHE DIDN'T BURN ANY MONEY?
HUH?
I'D NEVER BE SO WASTEFUL, YOU DANGED FOOL!
I LIED SO YOU'D ALL SHUT YOUR YAPS!
GOOD LORD...
YOU RE-ALIZE THAT NOW...
...THE KILLER'S GOING TO TARGET YOU.

BA
CRIM...
I...
DUM
WELL, IT'S LUCKY I HAVE ALL YOU BRAVE COPS AROUND TO PROTECT ME THEN!
YES, WE'RE HERE TO PROTECT YOU, BUT--
MURMUR
MURMUR
YOUR PRESENCE SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH, ANYWAYS.
THE CULPRIT'LL MAKE A RUN FOR IT.
BUT WE CAN'T STAY HERE FOREVER!
WE DON'T WANT YOU TO!
CATCH THE DAMN--

KUDOU ...SAN?
TREMBLE
...N-NAL...
TREMBLE
TREMBLE
BADUM
GLURB

FLOP
WAVER
TAE-SAN!
TWITCH
TWITCH
TWITCH

SHUDDER
DO
WAAAAH
DOC-TOR!
GET A DOC-TOR!
SHE WAS FULL OF FIRE...
...JUST A SECOND AGO...
A HEART ATTACK?!

MOVE!
OUTTA THE WAY!
TCH
WHUMP
WHUMP
TAE-SAN!
KUDOU-SAN!
SHE OKAY?!

HOW DID HE GET TO TAE-SAN?!
HE COULD ONLY HAVE FOUND OUT SHE DIDN'T BURN THE HUNDRED GRAND A MINUTE AGO!
STAGGER

AND WITH ALL OF US WATCHING HER THE WHOLE TIME...
WOBBLE
Mo....
NATSUKO...
GRAB
NATSU-KO!
HEY!
NATSU-KO...
YOU ALL RIGHT?

OH... KAZU-NARI...
TAE-SAN COL-LAPSED...
NI-!
SMILE
UM.
YEAH
I'M FINE.
YOU OKAY?
YOU WERE KIND OF SPACING OUT—
AH... UMM...
RABBLE
RABBLE
RABBLE
FORGET ABOUT ME—. WHAT HAP-PENED?
EVERY-ONE'S IN AN UPROAR.

NO...
NO...
CHATTER
CHATTER
MURMUR
MURMUR
SAD-LY...
I DON'T THINK SO.
IS SHE OKAY?
TA--
TAE-SAN?
WOBBLE
NATSU-KO!
CLENCH
GRAB

MURMUR
MURMUR
EVEN THE POLICE CAN'T STOP THE KING...
NOW THERE'LL BE ANOTHER...
MURMUR
"ANOTHER"...?
TURN

SILENCE
WHEN TAE-SAN COL-LAPSED...
...EVERY-ONE, COPS AND VIL-LAGERS ALIKE, RUSHED OVER HERE.
SO WHO'S WATCHING THE VIL-LAGE?
GASP

TODAY'S ROUND IS OVER.
KAZU-NARI?
NATSUKO, WAIT HERE.
WHICH MEANS...
SLAM
CLAT
GLANCE
CLAT
CREEEE...

*HONDA/ UME/ KAZUNARI

THIS IS THE KING'S GAME. ALL VILLAGERS ARE PARTICIPATING.
THE KING'S ORDERS ARE ABSOLUTE. PLEASE CARRY THEM OUT BY THE END OF THE DAY.
PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO QUIT.
ORDER 4: HONDA KAZUNARI MUST SELECT ONE VILLAGER OTHER THAN HIMSELF. THAT VILLAGER WILL BE BEHEADED.
IF THE ORDER IS NOT FOLLOWED, ALL VILLAGERS WILL BE BEHEADED.
MURMUR
MURMUR
SO, KAZUNARI-KUN FOUND THIS LETTER IN HIS OWN MAILBOX...
MURMUR
MURMUR
SLAM
DON'T BEAT AROUND THE BUSH, DAMNIT!
MURMUR

THURSDAY
AUGUST 11,
12:54 A.M.

NO, WE'RE NOT SAYING HE'S...
THEN CHANGE YOUR TONE!
OO THE POLICE THINK MY SON IS THE KING OR NOT?!
ALMOST EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE IS HERE!

IT'S OOUJIMA-SAN'S JOB TO BE SUSPICIOUS.
DAD... IT'S FINE.

HRMM...
LOOK, I'LL BE HONEST.
I THINK IT'S VERY, VERY UNLIKELY KAZUNARI-KUN IS BEHIND THIS.
THE REASON BEING...
...WE JUST RECEIVED WORD THAT KONDOU YUUICHI AND HIS WIFE MICHIYO BOTH PASSED AWAY SUD-DENLY.

THEY'RE DEAD?
YUP...BOTH LIKELY OF MYOCAR-DIAL INFARC-TIONS...
MORE COM-MONLY KNOWN AS HEART ATTACKS.

THEY LEFT THE VILLAGE IMMEDIATELY!
YOU... YOU'RE KIDDING...
WHY...
AS EVERYONE HERE SHOULD KNOW, THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T BURN THEIR MONEY...
—WERE THE LATE KUDOU TAE-SAN, AND THE KONDOUS, WHO LEFT THE VILLAGE THIS MORNING
DESPITE THE GREAT DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM, THEY ARE ALL DEAD REGARDLESS
THEREFORE WE BELIEVE THE KING MUST HAVE ACCOMPLICES
ACCOMPLICES...

OF COURSE, I STILL HAVE MY DOUBTS.
SUPPOSING THERE ARE MULTIPLE PARTIES COLLABORATING TO CARRY OUT THESE KILLINGS...
...HOW DO THEY KNOW WHO FAILED TO FOLLOW ORDERS?
THEY MUST'VE KNOWN THE KONDOUS DIDN'T BURN THEIR MONEY, SINCE THEY FLED THE VILLAGE
MURMUR ざわ
MURMUR ざわ
MURMUR ざわ
BUT NO ONE COULD'VE KNOWN KONDOU TAE-SAN DIDN'T PUT ANY MONEY IN THE ENVELOPE UNTIL SECONDS BEFORE HER DEATH--
NONE OF IT MATTERS!
THE PROBLEM IS THE NEW ORDER!
WHAT'RE THE POLICE GONNA DO ABOUT THIS?!
LURCH ヤバ

WE'LL....
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO CATCH THE CRIMINAL IN THE NEXT 23 HOURS--
.....
ARE YOU GONNA HAVE KAZUNARI CHOOSE SOMEONE?
OR ARE YOU JUST GONNA IGNORE THE LETTER ENTIRELY?!
WHOEVER'S BEHIND THIS IS MORE A DEMON THAN A MAN!
YUUICHI AND MICHIYO WERE KILLED EVEN AFTER THEY LEFT THE VILLAGE!
STOMP
STOMP
REMEMBER, IT'S OUR LIVES THAT'RE ON THE LINE!
WELL, YOU'D BETTER!

I...I WAS AT THE SQUARE WHEN TAE-SAN DIED...
SHE JUST DROPPED DEAD OUT OF THE BLUE..
AND I...I SAW SACHIKO-SAN'S BODY...
IT WAS LIKE A NIGHT-MARE...
EVEN IF WE LEAVE THE VILLAGE, WE MIGHT STILL GET KILLED LIKE THE KONDOUS.
KAZUNARI!
FLINCH
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO, KAZU-NARI?
WHO WILL YOU PICK?!
KAZU-NARI!

I...
I CAN'T DO IT!
WHO-EVER I CHOOSE...
...IS GONNA DIE!